

THE PLACER

A Voice of History

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In this Issue

1. Administrator's Notes
2. Stores
3. Stores
4. Museums
Intelligence
5. County Organization
News
6. Historical
Organizations
Committee/PCHS
Nominations
7. Calendar of Events

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Administrator's Notes

Melanie Barton

I think many of us have fond memories of the general stores from our youth. In my case it was a hardware store in downtown Chico. I loved going there because the owners always made me feel welcome. They called me by name, allowed me to browse at will, and answered all my questions. I loved the smells that must have been a combination of old floors, rope, nails, gardening supplies, kitchen wares, candles, candy, and so much more. As a result of this youthful experience, I've never been in a hardware store that I didn't like!

In our newest exhibit at the Placer County Museum, *A Tapestry of Lives*, we suggest that stores are one place where a sense of community developed. Stores did much more than offer necessary merchandise for sale. They were gathering places where neighbors discussed local news, shared a concern, and planned community activities. In Auburn today, there are still a few places where you can enjoy that 19th century atmosphere. My favorite is the Auburn Drug Company. The smells may be different from my childhood hardware store memory, but the welcoming warmth of the staff is the same.

The store is chockfull of interesting items and the soda fountain is a magnet for customers sharing news and gossip. Local coffee shops are also places where we can still experience comradery from a bygone era. At any time you can hear community leaders discussing important issues and planning events, mothers advising daughters, and students making plans for Friday night.

It is interesting that mega stores such as Starbucks and Barnes & Nobles recognize the value of creating this same general store atmosphere. They want their customers to stay longer so they provide comfortable seating with food and drink made available. Not only do customers stay longer, they interact, and buy more. Perhaps this is the latest twist to the role played by the general store in developing a sense of community.

I hope you will stop by the historic Courthouse to see *A Tapestry of Lives*. My guess is that the photographs and artifacts will bring back fond memories. We are always interested in your comments, so please let me know what you think of our newest exhibit.♣

From Miner to Merchant

Carmel Barry-Schweyer

Robert Gordon, Tom Sherman, A.J. Davidson, David W. Lubeck, Jacob Feldsberg, and B.D. Burt came to California to seek their fortunes. They came from Ireland, Massachusetts, Prussia, Russia, Germany, and New York respectively. They traveled for months across oceans in crowded ships and trekked across the plains by foot. Finally they arrived in that land where gold was free for the taking, only to find the rivers and streams, already swarming with gold seekers, had been gleaned of the easy gold. Thousands of young men from almost every country on earth lived in camps perched on bars of sand or bluffs above the waterways.

These six young men (all were between 18 and 24 when they came in the Gold Rush), and a few other enterprising miners, saw the need for the miners to get supplies. They opened tent stores in mining camps such as Stony Bar, Horseshoe Bar, Rattlesnake Bar, Grizzly Bear House, and Millertown. As early as 1850, wood framed buildings and even stone buildings held dry goods stores, general merchandise stores, butcher shops, and bakeries.

By 1860 Auburn had at least 17 merchants, with 13 in Michigan Bluff, 11 in Foresthill and Dutch Flat each. Iowa Hill had eight general merchandise stores. Todd's Valley, Virginiatown, Gold Hill, Rattlesnake Bar, Ophir, and Illinoistown had three to four stores each.

Bath, Forks House, Danesville, Smithville, Indiana Hill, Stony Bar, Horseshoe Bar, Grizzly Bear House, Monona Flat, and Millertown all had a least one store.

Jacob Feldberg advertised merchandise such as clothing, boots, shoes, hats, caps, blankets, shirts, hosiery, and perfumery in his store on Commercial Street in Auburn. While H. Friedlander listed clothing, dry goods, boots, shoes, hats and caps, blankets, carpets, house furnishing goods, baskets, and fancy articles in his store opposite the Forest House in Foresthill. Robert Gordon had a fireproof brick building on the NW corner of Main and Commercial Streets in Auburn and delivered goods free of charge within four miles of his store. He carried



June Sawtell Grocery Store (June Sawtell on the left, clerk C.A. Fisher on the right)

groceries, liquors, syrups, oils, turpentine, feed, burning fluids, hardware, mining and farming implements. George Willment's store, located on the corner of Commercial and Court Streets in Auburn also advertised a variety of goods. David Lubeck's offered, 'country orders punctually attended to' in his store located at Round Corner on Main Street opposite the American Hotel in Auburn.

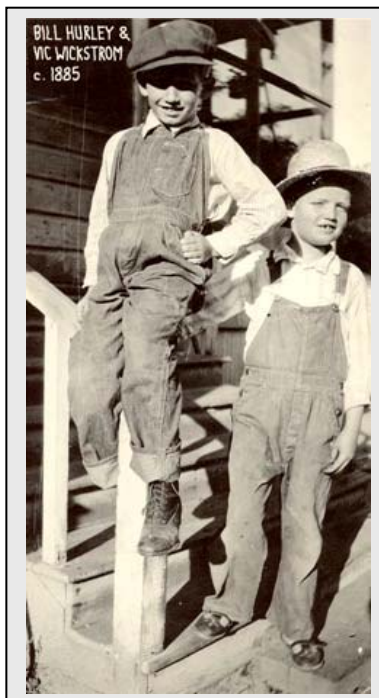
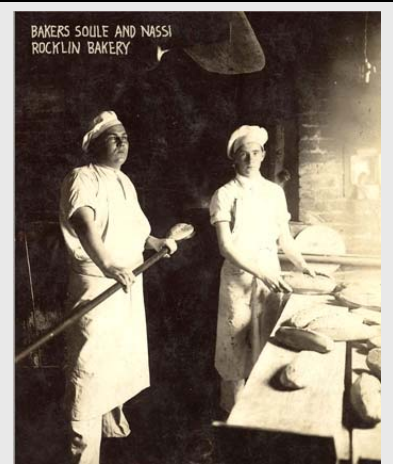
Illinoistown's Egbert & Co. store carried the usual goods and 'delivered to all parts of the mines.'

The Gold Rush gave birth to an entrepreneurial spirit in many men who came to find their fortunes in gold. However, they found that fortunes could be made by providing services for the miners. One example of the success of these merchants can be seen today in the David Lubeck home on Lubeck Avenue in Auburn.♥

Images from our New Exhibit: *A Tapestry of Lives*

The exhibit is located in the Placer County Museum in Auburn's historic Courthouse.

Museum Hours: 10 – 4 Daily
Free Admission!



Lubeck Home





Museums Intelligence

Placer County Museums News

Ralph Gibson

Blue skies have filled the upper windows of my office the past week. The wind, which has an icy bite, has been gaining strength in the afternoons. I don't think I need a calendar to tell that spring is just around the corner – no matter what that groundhog in Pennsylvania says. Winter passed quickly because we have been busy. Nearly 300 students participated in our new Gold Rush program at the Gold Country Museum, encompassing 11 sessions in January and February. Staff is eagerly preparing for the spring Living History sessions, and we have also begun redesigning all the exhibits at the Griffith Quarry Museum.

Spring is likely to be even busier. Between Living History and the exhibits at the Griffith Quarry Museum, we'll be making a couple of changes at the Golden Drift Museum, and we'll be reinstalling an exhibit that was removed in the Forest Hill Divide Museum. The exhibit was removed by our staff after a large pine tree crashed through the front porch of the museum during that powerful storm on

January 4th. The roof was damaged, but no water entered the museum.

With spring comes new flowers, new birds, and – for us – a couple of new employees. Please welcome Sandee Benson and Sara Hay. Sandee was hired in January as our new extra-help curator, and Sara was hired to help with Living History. Sandee and Sara will work closely with Karen Mattson. Please say hello and welcome them to the museums!

Community Education Program: *Women of the Old West*

Please join us on Saturday, March 15th in the historic Courthouse foyer in Auburn at 11:00 am for *Women of the Old West*, presented by author Chris Enss. Chris has authored or co-authored 14 books on the subject. Copies of her books are available in the Placer County Museum Gift Shop. Chris will sign books after the presentation. For more information, please call 530-889-6500.

Community Education Program: *The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm*

Renowned author and weather historian Mark McLaughlin will present this program in the Bernhard Winery on Saturday, April 12th at 1:00 pm. Mark has written four books, including

his latest book, *The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm*, which was honored with a Best Non-Fiction Book Award. He has received the Nevada State Press Award five times.♣

Community Education Program Schedule

March 15th – *Women of the Old West*
Presented by Chris Enss
at the Historic
Courthouse at 11:00 am

April 12th – *The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm*
Presented by Mark McLaughlin at the Bernhard Winery
At 1:00 pm

May 3rd – *Deco Music*
Presented by Virginia Hawthorn in the Bernhard Winery at 1:00 pm

June 21st – *Jump into Summer ~ 19th Century Kids Games*
At the Bernhard Museum
from 11:00 – 3:00 pm

Placer County Historical Society News



President's Message

*Michael Otten,
President*

One of the richest Americans of all times began his road to wealth and becoming a household name after dropping out of school in New York and walking across the country. His 1852 journey brought him to Placer County and he became a part of the new mining communities that popped up along the Auburn Ravine west of Auburn.

Yet, daresay, most in Placer County know little of this man who hit it big or the once thriving community of Virginia (later Virginia Town) or nearby Gold Hill, both once stage coach stops. One teen today is sprucing up the monument sites that recognize those Gold Rush towns in hopes more people might stop and learn a little history. Virginia was founded in June 1851; Gold Hill, April 1852. They were named before their counterparts of Virginia City and nearby Gold Hill, Nevada.

Philip Danforth Armour worked as a miner and, more successfully, as a ditch contractor, selling water to miners to help them separate the gold. Armour also partnered with George Aldrich in a butcher shop that is said to have lead to the founding of the famous Chicago-based Armour Meat Packing Co. So says State Registered Landmark No. 400 for Virginiatown that was placed by the State Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Placer County Historical Society and Placer County.

Taking part in the dedication ceremonies on Sunday, Sept. 28, 1952, were Mrs. Guy Gilbert Gilchrist of Dutch Flat, PCHS president; Superior Court Judge Lowell Sparks and Joseph R. Knowland, chairman of the State Parks Commission and president of

the California Historical Society. Next to the marker still sat a ramshackle adobe building, said to be the store and butcher shop of Armour and Aldrich. It is no longer there.

Armour returned east at the age of 24 with several thousand dollars and soon turned to meatpacking. According to one account near the end of the Civil War he found a way to turn meat to gold selling pork futures at \$40 a barrel and then buying the pork for \$18 after the Confederacy collapsed. The profit went into building Armour & Company. He was credited with creating assembly line meat processing and utilizing leftovers to make glue, soap, fertilizer and other things or, as he was quoted as once saying, Armour "used everything but the squeal." When he died in 1901 Armour's net worth was placed at \$50 million, making him one of the wealthiest Americans of all time when you compare his net worth to the gross national product of that period.

The Gold Hill monument, at the site of Maidu acorn grinding rocks was dedicated by the PCHS in May 1974. The site was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Joe "Frances" Facha. The marker was sponsored by Stella Watson. The marker notes Gold Hill had two hotels, a general store and jail and that Masonic Lodge No. 32 first met here Nov. 3, 1852.

Today, Boy Scout Garrett Cardinet, who lives on Virginiatown Road, is busily cleaning up the sites around the Virginiatown marker and the nearby Gold Hill marker at the Gold Hill Road intersection. The cleanups are part of Garrett's Eagle Scout project.

Garrett, 15, a Lincoln High student with a 3.8 GPA, and his father, Jason, attended our February dinner meeting. Garrett is trying to follow in the steps of his three older brothers who obtained their Eagle Scout awards by the age of 16.

Father Jason calls it a powerful incentive toward getting a driver's license.

"The reason I am doing this," said Garrett of his project, "is because these are important markers and when you drive by them you hardly ever notice them. I hope that what I do will make people want to read what is on these markers." Stop by and take a look.♠

--Michael Otten, otten@ssctv.net

Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting

Addah Owens, Vice President

When: April 3, 2008

Time: 6:30 Dinner, 7:30

Program

Where: Veteran's Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn, CA

Cost: \$13 per person

Menu: Ham Dinner catered by Mary Belle's Restaurant

Mail Check to: PCHS, c/o Betty Samson, 8780 Baxter Grade Road, Auburn, CA 95603.

Program: On April 18, 1906 at 5:15 A.M. an 8.25 magnitude earthquake lasting one minute struck San Francisco. It was considered the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. Fires ravaged the city for three days before burning themselves out. 490 city blocks were destroyed, 250,000 people were made homeless and the damage topped \$400,000,000.

Terry Cook, historian for the California State Parks, will present a power point presentation depicting the damage and living conditions after the earthquake. She will focus on some of the local involvement in this disaster.♦

Placer County Historical Organizations

Colfax Area Historical Society
Myrtle Findley, (530) 346-2450
PO Box 185
Colfax, CA 95713-0185
www.foothill.net/colfax/history

Foresthill Divide Historical
Society
Troy Semester,
(530) 367-3535
PO Box 1175
Foresthill, CA 95631
www.foresthillhistory.org

Friends of Griffith Quarry
Cliff Kennedy, (916) 663-2122
PO Box 10
Penryn, CA 95663-0326

Golden Drift Historical Society
Doug Ferrier, (530) 389-2617
PO Box 20
Dutch Flat, CA 95714-0020

Historical Advisory Board
Donna Coffman, (530) 889-6500
101 Maple St. Rm. 104
Auburn, CA 95603

Joss House Museum and
Chinese History Center
Charles Allen
PO Box 9126
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 878-4602

Lincoln Highway Association
Robert Dietrich, (916) 962-1428
P.O. Box 2554
Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2554
www.lincolnhwy.org

Loomis Basin Historical
Society Alice Barnes, (916)
652-7844
PO Box 2195
Loomis, CA 95659-2195
www.ppgn.com

Maidu Interpretive Center
Kristie Stevens,
(916) 774-5934
1960 Johnson Ranch Drive
Roseville, CA 95661
www.roseville.ca.us/indianmuseum

Newcastle Portuguese Hall
Association
Aileen Gage, (530) 885-9113
PO Box 993, 690 Taylor Rd.
Newcastle, CA 95658

Placer County Historical
Society
Michael Otten, (530) 888-7837
PO Box 5643
Auburn, CA 95604
www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

Placer County Genealogical
Society
Jerry Unruh, (530) 887-2646
PO Box 7385
Auburn, CA 95604
www.pcgenes.com

Rocklin Historical Society
Carol Powell (916) 435-4604
History Museum
(916) 624-3464
PO Box 752
Rocklin, CA 95677-0752
www.rocklinhistory.org

Roseville Historical Society
(916) 773-3003
557 Lincoln St.
Roseville, CA 95678
www.rosevillehistorical.org

Placer County Historical Society Officer Nominations 2008

The following have been nominated to serve as officers of the PCHS for the 2008-09 year:

President:	Michael Otten
1 st Vice President	George Lay
2 nd Vice President	Addah Owens
Secretary	No nomination yet
Treasurer	Al Stoll

Board Members (two year terms):

Sherri Schackner; Betty Samson; Penny Watson; Karri Samson; and immediate past President George Lay

Additional nominations may be made at the annual dinner meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 3, at Veterans Memorial Hall, 100 East St., Auburn. The election will follow immediately.

We are looking for someone to fill the post of secretary. If interested in the position or serving on the board please contact Betty Samson, Walt Wilson or Michael Otten soon.

Calendar of Events

March

- Mar 15th, 11:00 am** Community Education Program: *Women of the Old West*, presented by Chris Enss in the historic Courthouse in Auburn. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Mar 17th, 7:00 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Business Meeting at the Foresthill Divide Museum. Contact (530) 367-2430.
- Mar 17th, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society Meeting at the Rocklin Library. Contact 916-624-3464.
- Mar 19th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting at the Loomis Library. Contact (916) 652-7844.
- Mar 27th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogy Society General Meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact (530) 887-2646.

April

- Apr 3rd, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Society Dinner Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall. Cost is \$13 per person. Contact Betty Samson (530) 885-5074.
- Apr 12th, 1:00 pm** Community Education Program: *The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm*, presented by Mark McLaughlin in the Bernhard Museum Winery. Contact: 530-889-6500.
- Apr 16th, 6:30 pm** Loomis Basin Historical Society Meeting at the Loomis Library. Contact (916) 652-7844.
- Apr 16th, 6:30 pm** Placer County Historical Advisory Board Meeting in the Bernhard Winery. Contact (530) 889-6500.
- Apr 21st, 6:30 pm** Foresthill Divide Historical Society Potluck Meeting at the Foresthill Memorial Hall. Contact (530) 367-2430.
- Apr 21st, 7:00 pm** Rocklin Historical Society Meeting at the Rocklin Library. Contact (916) 624-3464.
- Apr 24th, 7:00 pm** Placer County Genealogy Society General Meeting in the Beecher Room at the Auburn Library. Contact (530) 887-2646.

Placer County Museums
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

